

# John and the Ghosts

By A. T. Quiller-Couch ("O.")

(Copyright, 1901, by A. T. Quiller-Couch.)  
In the kingdom of Illyria there lived not long ago a poor woodcutter with three sons, who in time went forth to seek their fortunes. At the end of three years they returned by agreement to compare their progress in the world. The eldest had become a lawyer and the second a merchant, and each of these had won riches and friends, but John, the youngest, who had enlisted in the army, could only show a cork leg and a medal.

"You have made a bad business of it," said his brothers. "Your medal is worthless, except to a collector of such things, and your leg is a positive disadvantage. Fortunately we have influence and since you are our brother we must see what we can do for you."  
Now, the king of Illyria lived at that time in his capital, in a brick palace at the end of the great park. He kept this park open to all and allowed no one to build in it. But the richest citizens, who were so fond of their ruler that they could not live out of his sight, had their houses just beyond the park. In the rear of the palace, on a piece of ground which they called Palace Gardens, the name was a little misleading, for the true gardens lay in front of the palace, where children of all classes played among the trees and flower beds and artificial ponds, and the king sat and watched them, because the sight of them cheered his only daughter, who had fallen into a deep melancholy. But the rich citizens clung to it, for it gave a pleasant, neighborly air to their roadway and showed what friendliness there was between the monarch of Illyria and his people.

At either end you entered the roadway (if you were allowed) by an iron gate. And each gate had a sentry box beside it and a tall ladder and a notice board to save him the trouble of explanation. The notice man: "Private. The Beadle has orders to refuse admittance to all Wagons, Tradesmen's Carts, Hackney Coaches, Donkeys, Regs, Disorderly Characters or Persons Carrying Burdens." A sentry five had told to severely upon one of two headless that he could no longer enter his box with a dignity or to read his newspaper there with any comfort. He resigned and John obtained the post by his brothers' interest, in spite of his cork leg.

He had now a bright green suit with scarlet piping, a gold watch, a fashionable address and very little to do. But the army had taught him to be active and for lack of anything better he fell into deep thinking. This came near to bring him into trouble. One evening he looked out of his sentry box and saw a mild and somewhat sad-looking old gentleman approaching the gate.

"No admittance," said John.  
"The king," said the old gentleman. "I'm the king."  
John looked at the face on his medal and sure enough there was a resemblance. "But all the same your majesty carries a burden"—here he pointed to the notice-board—"and the folks along this road are mighty particular."  
The king smiled, and then sighed heavily. "It's about the princess, my daughter," said he; "she has not smiled for a whole year."

"I'll warrant I'd make her," said John.  
"I'll warrant you could not," said the king. "She will never smile again until she is married."  
"Then," answered John, "speaking in a humble way as becomes me, why the dickens alive don't you marry her up and get done with it?"

The king shook his head. There's a condition attached," said he. "Maybe you have heard of the famous Haunted House in Pustynin square?"  
"I've always gone by the spelling and pronounced it Pustynin," said John.  
"Well, the condition is that every suitor for my daughter's hand must spend a night alone in that house; and if he survives and is ready to persevere until he is willing to marry her, I will give him my daughter and the night of his marriage there."

"And very handy," said John, "for there's a wedding cake shop at the corner."  
The king sighed again. "Unhappily none survive. One hundred and not a man of them but has either lost his wits or run for it."  
"Well," said John, "I've been afraid of a great many men—"

"That's a poor confession for a soldier," put in the king.  
"—when they all happened to come at me together. But I've never yet met the ghost that could frighten me or if my majesty will give me the latchkey I'll try my luck this very night."

It could not be done in this free-and-easy way, but at 6 o'clock, after John had visited the palace and taken an oath in the princess' presence (which was his first sight of her) he was driven down to the house beside the lord chamberlain, who admitted him to the black front hall, and slamming the door upon him, scuttled out of the porch as quickly as possible and into his brougham.

John struck a match, and as he did so, heard the carriage roll away. The walls were bare and the floor and great staircase ahead of him carpetless. As the match flickered out he caught a glimpse of a pair of feet moving up the stairs; that was all—only feet. "I'll catch up with the gloves on the landing, maybe," said he, and striking another match he followed them up.

The feet turned aside on the landing and led him into a room on the right. He paused on the threshold, drew a candle from his pocket, lit it and stared about him. The room was of great size, bare and dusty, with crimson hangings and panels and one huge gilt chandelier, from which, and from the ceiling and cornice long cobwebs trailed down like creeping plants. Beneath the chandelier a dark smoky ray along the fireplace, and as they did so, John saw them stained with blood. They reached the fireplace and vanished.

Scarcely had this happened before the end of the room opposite the window began to glow with an unearthly light. John, whose poverty had taught him to be economical, promptly blew out his candle. A moment later two men entered, bearing a coffin between them. They rested it upon the floor, and, seating themselves upon it, began to cast dice. "Your soul," "My soul," they kept saying in hollow tones, as they cast, with an air of indifference as they won or lost. At length one of them—a tall man in a powdered wig, with a face extraordinarily pale—flung a hand to his brow, rose and staggered from the room. The other sat waiting and twirling his black moustache, with an evil smile. John, who by this time had found a seat in a far corner, thought him the most poisonous looking villain he had ever seen, but as the minutes passed and nothing happened, he turned his back to the light and pulled out a book. His hitting taste was shocking, and when it came to romance he liked the incidents to follow one another with great rapidity.

He was interrupted by a blood-curdling groan, and the first man broke into the room, dragging by its gray locks the body of an old man. A young girl followed weeping and protesting, with disheveled

hair, and behind her entered a priest with brazier full of glowing charcoal. The girl cast herself forward on the old man's body, but the two scoundrels dragged her from it by force. "The money," demanded the dark one, and she drew from her bosom a small key and cast it at his feet. "My promise!" demanded the other, and seized her by the wrist, as the priest stepped forward. "Quick—over this coffin—man and wife!" She wrenched her hand away and thrust him backward, a red haze followed, and so did the wedding guests, since no one opposed them.

The hall and staircase were decorated with palms and pot plants, flags and emblems of Illyria, and in the great drawing-room—which they entered while John persuaded the king to a seat—they found many rows of morose-covered chairs, a miniature stage with a drop representing the play scene in "Hamlet," a row of footlights, a



THE GIRL CAST HERSELF FORWARD ON THE OLD MAN'S BODY, BUT THE TWO SCOUNDRELS DRAGGED HER FROM IT BY FORCE.

"Meaning me?" asked John.  
"Ay, sir, and to destroy you tonight if you contract not upon your soul to return with your bride and meet us here a twelve-month hence."  
"H'm," said John to himself, "they are three to one, and after all, it's what I came for." "I suppose," he added aloud, "some form of document is usual in these cases."

The dark man drew out pen and parchment. "Hold forth your hand," he commanded; and, as John held it out, thinking he meant to shake it over the bargain, the fellow drove the pen into his wrist until the blood spurted. "Now sign!"

"Sign!" said the other villain.  
"Sign!" said the lady.  
"Oh, very, very well, miss; if you're in the swind, too, my mind is easier," said John, and signed his name with a flourish.

"A bargain is a bargain, and what security," he said, "for your part in it?"  
"Our signature!" said the priest, "at the same moment pressing his branding iron into John's ankle. A smell of burnt cork arose as John stooped and clasped his hand over the scorched stocking. When he looked up again his visitors had vanished, and a moment later the strange light, too, died away."

But the coffin remained for evidence that he had not been dreaming. John lit a candle and examined it. "Just the thing for me," he exclaimed, finding it to be a more shell of pine boards, loosely nailed together and painted black; "I was beginning to shiver." He knocked the coffin to pieces, crammed them into the fireplace and very soon had a grand fire blazing, before which he sat and finished his Penny Dreadful, and so dropped off into a sound sleep.

The lord chamberlain arrived early in the morning and, finding him stretched there, at first broke into lamentations over the fate of yet another personable young man, but soon changed his tune when John sat up and, rubbing his eyes, demanded to be told the time.

"But you are really alive? We must drive back and tell his majesty at once!" "Stay a moment," said John. "There's a brother of mine, a lawyer, in the city. He will be arriving at his office about this time and you must drive me there, for I have a document here of a sort and must have it stamped to be on the safe side."

So into the city he was driven beside the lord chamberlain and there had his leg stamped and filed for reference and, having purchased another, was conveyed to the palace, where the king received him with open arms.

He was now a favored guest at court, and had frequent opportunities of seeing and conversing with the princess, with whom he soon fell deeply in love. But as the months passed and the time drew near for their marriage he grew silent and thoughtful, for he feared to expose her, even in company, to the sights he had witnessed in the haunted house.

He thought and thought, until one fine afternoon he snapped his fingers suddenly, and after that went abroad whistling. A fortnight before the day fixed for the wedding he drove into the city again, but this time to the office of his other brother, the merchant.

"I want," he said, "the loan of £10,000." "Nothing easier," said his brother. "Here are £500. Of the remainder I shall keep £50 as interest for the first year at 5 per cent and the odd £100 should purchase a premium of insurance for £2,000 which I will retain as security against accident."

out the ceremonies, accompanied his daughter to the haunted house. The princess was pale, John, on the contrary, who sat facing her father in the state coach, smiled with a cheerfulness which, under the circumstances, seemed a trifle ill-bred. The wedding guests followed in twenty-four chariots. Their cards of invitation had said "2 to 5:30 p. m.," and it was now 6 o'clock, but they could not resist the temptation to see the last of "the poor dear thing" as they agreed to call the bride.

The king sat silent during the drive, he was preparing his farewell speech, which he meant to deliver in the porch. But arriving and perceiving a crowd about it, and also (to his vast astonishment) a red haze carpet on the porch and a bulker bowing in the doorway with two footmen behind him, he coughed down his exordium and led his daughter into the hall, amid showers of rice and confetti. The bridegroom followed, and so did the wedding guests, since no one opposed them.

The hall and staircase were decorated with palms and pot plants, flags and emblems of Illyria, and in the great drawing-room—which they entered while John persuaded the king to a seat—they found many rows of morose-covered chairs, a miniature stage with a drop representing the play scene in "Hamlet," a row of footlights, a

table, a piano and a man seated at the keyboard, whom they recognized as a performer in much demand at suburban dances.

The company had scarcely seated itself before a strange light began to illuminate that end of the room at which the stage stood and immediately the curtain rose to the overture of M. Offenbach's "Orpheus aux Enfers," the pianist continuing with great spirit until a round of applause greeted the entrance of the two spectral performers.

Its effect upon them was in the highest degree disconcerting. They set down the coffin, and, after a brief and hurried conference in undertone, the black mustachioed ghost advanced to the footlights, and, with a terrible scowl, demanded to know the reason of this extraordinary gathering.

"Come, come, my dear sir," answered John. "Our contract, if you will study it, allows me to invite whom I choose; it merely insists that my bride and I must be present, as you see we are. Pray go on with your part and assure yourself it is no use to try the high horse with me."

The dark ghost looked at his partner, who shuffled uneasily. "I told you," said he, "we should have trouble with this fellow. I had a presentiment of it when he came to spend the night here without bringing a coffin. The frightening of the bullock out of his wits has always been our most effective bit of business."

Hereupon the dark ghost took another look. "Our fair, but unfortunate victim has a sore throat tonight," he announced; "the performance is consequently postponed," and he seated himself sulkily upon the coffin, when the limelight man from the wings promptly bathed him in a flood of the most beautiful rose color. "Oh, this is intolerable!" he exclaimed, starting to his feet.

"It is not first-rate, I agree," said John. "but such as it is, we had better go through with it. Should the company doubt my good-will, I can go around afterward and tap the brand on the cork." Here he tapped the leg which he had been careful to bring with him.

Before this evidence of contract the ghosts' resistance collapsed. They seated themselves on the coffin and began the casting of dice; the performance proceeded, but in a half-hearted and perfunctory manner, notwithstanding the vigorous efforts of the limelight man.

The tall ghost struck his brow and fled from the stage. There were cries of "Call him back!" but John explained that this was part of the drama and no encores would be allowed. Whereupon the audience fell to hissing the villain, who now sat alone with the most life-like expression of malignity.

"O long it!" he expostulated after a while. "I am doing this under protest, and you need not make it worse for a fellow. I draw the line at hissing!"

"It's the usual thing," explained John amiably.  
But when the ghostly lady walked on, and in the act of falling on her father's body, was interrupted by the pianist, who handed up an immense bundle of performers held another hurried colloquy.

"Look here," said the dark-browed villain, stepping forward and addressing John. "What will you take to call it quits?"

"I'll take," said John, "the key which the lady has just handed you. And if the treasure is at all commensurate with the fuss you have been making about it, we'll let bygones be bygones."

Well, it was; and John, having counted it out behind the curtain, came forward and asked the pianist to play "God Save the King"; and so, having bowed his guests to the door, took possession of the haunted house and lived in it many years with his bride, in high renown and prosperity.

Publish your legal notices in The Weekly Bee. Telephone 124.

## IN THE FIELD OF ELECTRICITY

Progressive Strides of Current Power in the Domain of Steam

COST OF OPERATION AND PROFITS

Instructive Review of Rival Powers Seeking Local Trade—Illustrating Water Power—Some Improvements.

The problem of substituting electricity for steam power on suburban lines is receiving more earnest attention from railroad managers than appears on the surface. In many notable instances throughout the country trolley lines have taken from steam roads the bulk of suburban traffic and are steadily reaching out for the remainder. That trolley people are not satisfied with that, but are extending their lines, connecting nearby cities, and thus depriving steam roads of profitable local business. In some instances the trolley lines connecting two or more cities or towns are reaching for freight traffic, and this competition for freight is destined to increase as the trolley lines expand. Steam roads are obliged in self-defense to meet

this competition. The problem is how it can be met as cheaply as the trolley lines can do it. It is generally conceded that the steam roads must meet the trolley lines with like power and facilities. But the former cannot employ overhead wires to convey power over present lines, owing to the risk of interfering with regular traffic. Other means of conveying electric power is being sought diligently. Last week the Burlington third rail plan was tested on the Burlington lines near Chicago. The feature of this system is that the rail conveying the current is "dead" except at the point of contact with the shoe of the car. The purpose of the test was to determine whether contact would carry the current to the regular rails. As the test was pronounced satisfactory it is presumed the Burlington intends giving the system a more extended trial with a view to ultimate adoption of suburban electric trains similar to those of the Chicago elevated roads.

What Electric Roads Are Doing. United States Investor, a New York publication, publishes an instructive study of reports of electric lines and the remarkable activity prevailing in that branch of construction. Investor says the average earnings per mile of steam roads in America from passenger traffic for the past year amounted to \$174, while the average earnings of the interurban electric roads were nearly two and a half times that amount, being approximately \$3,800 per mile. The earnings of many roads, however, run very much higher, as in the case of the Southern Missouri Electric company, which earns \$4,735 per mile; the Union Traction of Indiana, with earnings of \$4,984 per mile, and the Northern Ohio Traction, with \$5,520 per mile. The earnings of the interurban are not so quickly so severely affected.

The Michigan Central found that on its trains bound for Detroit such a large proportion of the passengers left the train at Ann Arbor and rode on into Detroit over the electric line that it was necessary to lighten considerably the service between the two cities. The reason for this is obvious, for the steam railroad fare from Ann Arbor to Detroit is \$1.20, while the electric line fare is only 50 cents, so that passengers leaving the steam road at Ann Arbor and continuing to Detroit by the electric line make a saving of 70 cents. The Big Four railroad, running from Muncie, Ind., through Anderson to Indianapolis, had the same experience in connection with the Union Traction company and at one time almost discontinued its suburban service between those cities, but it is now undertaking to regain the traffic in competition with the electric line. Instances of this kind might be multiplied, as in the case of the St. Louis & San Francisco railway, and the Missouri Pacific railway in their competition with the Southwest Missouri electric line between Carthage and Joplin, or of the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern with the Toledo, Fremont & Norwalk line in Ohio; but the results have all been the same. In the last case above mentioned the fare charged by the steam railroad between the termini of the electric line is \$1.50, while the fare over the interurban line is only 90 cents. The Flint & Pere Marquette railroad found that so many passengers left their trains at Northville to ride on into Detroit over the Detroit & Northwestern Electric road that their own cars ran into the city nearly empty. In order to "stop this loss of traffic" they cut Northville out of their schedules and ran their trains through the town without stopping. The result, however, was not what the steam road expected, for the community, forced to rely on the electric line for its passenger service, transferred its freight business to it also and found the service so satisfactory that all efforts of the steam road to regain the traffic have been unavailing.

Cost of Operation. The average cost of operation of the steam roads of this country in 1900 is reported by the Interstate Commerce commission to have been 64.6 per cent of their gross earnings, while the average cost of operation of interurban lines was only 34 per cent of their gross earnings. There can hardly be a question as to the future when parallel lines show such a difference in cost of operation. The Union Traction company of

You only tantalize the appetite when you serve your soup or oysters without

# Kennedy's Oysterettes

An oyster cracker with a taste to it. Small, crisp and flaky, with just a savor of salt.

5 cents a package. Sold and served everywhere.

NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY.

## Quicker Time California

...To... CALIFORNIA

The Union Pacific has recently reduced the already fast time of "THE OVERLAND LIMITED" between Omaha and California making the run several hours quicker than heretofore. This famous train is solid vestibuled and leaves Omaha daily at 8:50 a. m. with through Palace Sleepers, Dining Cars and Buffet Cars.

The Union Pacific also has 2 other fast trains: "THE CALIFORNIA EXPRESS", Leaving Omaha Daily at 4:25 p. m. to California— "THE PACIFIC EXPRESS", Leaving Omaha Daily at 11:20 p. m.

ALL COMPETITION DISTANCED

City Ticket Office, 1324 Farnam St. Telephone 36

Union Station, 10th and Marcy Sts. Telephone 629

## The Bad Boy's Bowel Blessing

Nature punishes every excess, not only of the bad boy, but of ourselves as well. Over-eating, over-drinking, under-sleeping result in bowel troubles liable to become serious.

"My children will take Casarett's sooner than I'll ever come across it."  
—Mrs. Frank Mower, Princeton, Ill.  
"I am now getting Casarett's for my family and they are wonderful among children."  
—Mrs. D. C. Johnson, Portsmouth, Va.  
"Our little girl was troubled with constipation for over two years. Casarett cured her. They are also the best remedy for colic we have ever used. I can recommend them to all mothers and my little boy is cured by them."  
—Mrs. J. M. McCrossen, 205 Bond St., Philadelphia, Pa.

"Casarett's are the easiest medicine to give to children I ever came across."  
—Mrs. E. P. Kelly, 461 Irving St., Pittsburg, Pa.  
"My two boys think Casarett's are candy. I never have to insist on their taking them. I sleep with a box of Casarett's under my pillow. No home should be without them."  
—Mrs. G. W. Probst, Chicago, Ill.

"Casarett's are wonderfully good for children."  
—Mrs. Wm. Ross, Catawamoc, N. Y.  
"We have used Casarett's for three years for the children as well as ourselves. They do just what they say on the box. The general climate conditions of the state are also an aid to this development. The average low relative humidity of the atmosphere greatly aids in the transmission of the electric current by permitting a high order of insulation of the line. In this way power is transmitted over long distances, considerably farther than elsewhere in this country. A notable instance of this is the power plant on the Yuba river in Sierra Nevada mountains, where electricity is generated which operates the street cars of Oakland, 140 miles away. Power has also been used over the same line at San Jose, a distance of 150 miles from the generating plant. This is said to be the longest line of power transmission in existence."

There are a number of other interesting electric plants in California besides that on the Yuba river. One on the north fork of the San Joaquin river, in the east central part of the state, supplies power for light and general purposes to the city of Fresno and surrounding towns distant about seventy miles. On the different branches of the Kern river there are several plants, some of which are intended to furnish power for the city of Los Angeles, situated 105 miles away. To this San Antonio Light and Power company, however, belongs the credit of the erection of the first plant for the long distance transmission of electricity in the United States. In 1892 current was delivered over the lines of this company to the cities of Pomona and San Bernardino, a distance of eighty and twenty-eight miles respectively, at a line voltage of 10,000 volts, an achievement hitherto unrecorded. Of these and other plants are all run by the splendid water powers of the state and the great possibilities for further development are limited only by economic need.

Much attention through a series of years has been given to a careful and systematic study of the streams of California, to secure the data on which depend their development for power and irrigation purposes. Most of this work has been done by the United States geological survey as a part of its general investigation of the water resources of the whole country.

Today (take Foley's Home and Tar. It positively prevents pneumonia, or other serious results from colds. It may be too late tomorrow.

Best for the Bowels. All druggists, sec. 25c. per box. Never sold in bulk. The genuine tablet stamped C. C. C. Guaranteed to cure or your money back. Sample and booklet free. Address Sterling Remedy Company, Chicago or New York.

lamp, which has been on exhibition at the Pan-American exposition and which gives either one or sixteen-candle power. The exhibit was fitted with recording watt meters which show the lamp's economy. A ruby "Hylo" lamp for the photographic room, made from natural-colored glass and giving the orange-ruby effect, was exhibited. This gives a dim light to load cameras and start development and a bright light to finish development when the plate is less sensitive and when more light is needed in order to correctly gauge the work. This lamp has two carbon threads, one of the usual size, giving either eight or sixteen-candle power, and a very small "baby" filament giving one-candle power. A quarter revolution of the lamp in its socket turns out the big filament and lights the "baby" filament, which accomplishes the same thing as a switch. This lamp has two carbon threads, one of the usual size, giving either eight or sixteen-candle power, and a very small "baby" filament giving one-candle power. A quarter revolution of the lamp in its socket turns out the big filament and lights the "baby" filament, which accomplishes the same thing as a switch. This lamp has two carbon threads, one of the usual size, giving either eight or sixteen-candle power, and a very small "baby" filament giving one-candle power. A quarter revolution of the lamp in its socket turns out the big filament and lights the "baby" filament, which accomplishes the same thing as a switch.